



# Santa Fe, New Mexico Police Department

## Staffing Needs Assessment



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The National Police Foundation (NPF) team would like to thank Mayor Webber, Chief of Police Padilla, the officers and staff of the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD), and City of Santa Fe officials and staff for the opportunity to work collaboratively to develop effective recommendations designed to achieve department goals. Everyone has shown a tremendous willingness and desire to address issues facing the Santa Fe Police Department. Their progressive mindset, receptiveness to honest assessment and feedback, and willingness to partner with the NPF team is confirmation of the department's sincere desire to achieve their mission of making the City of Santa Fe a better, safer place to work and live.

The NPF team immediately recognized that the SFPD is staffed with tremendously talented and dedicated officers and staff at every level, who are committed to providing the highest levels of service to the citizens and visitors in the City of Santa Fe. The SFPD is facing a crisis not experienced before, which is causing significant organizational strain. Officers and staff were forthcoming with their guidance and opinions to address the challenges the department is facing. Their valuable contributions are the foundation necessary to increase SFPD's organizational capacity to achieve their mission of providing ethical and professional law enforcement services and protection while striving to maintain the trust and confidence of Santa Fe's citizens.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Mayor Alan Webber was elected in 2018 as the first full-time Mayor of the City of Santa Fe,<sup>1</sup> deviating from the previous city government structure of a part-time Mayor. Mayor Webber appointed Erik Litzenberg as City Manager, who then appointed Andrew Padilla as Chief of Police in June of 2018. Together they have worked to tackle an array of issues they inherited that has plagued the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) and the City for many years.

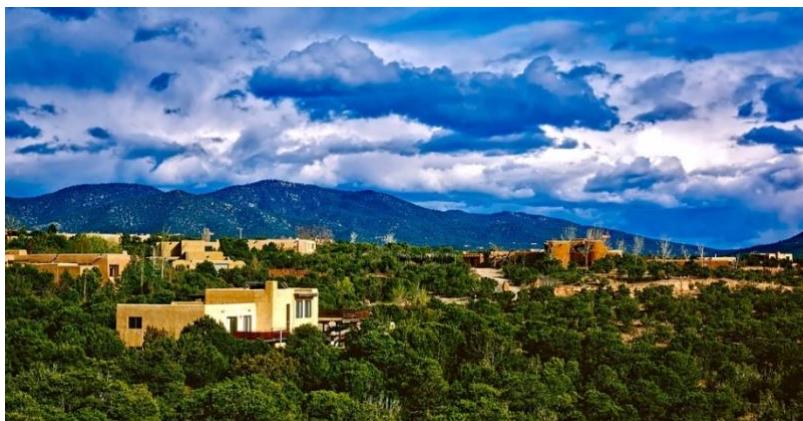
In early 2019, The National Police Foundation (NPF) was asked to provide an assessment of pressing personnel and staffing needs and to make recommendations for how the department could improve recruitment and retention. The NPF team has extensive law enforcement experience, and more specifically in the areas of recruiting, selection, and retention of police personnel. The NPF team partnered with SFPD to review policies, and to conduct interviews with command, mid-level rank-and-file personnel, and staff members of Santa Fe City Hall to obtain honest feedback and input. While officer recruitment and retention concerns are being felt in agencies across the country, unique intertwining issues are making it especially challenging in Santa Fe.

The NPF team aims to work collaboratively with the SFPD by identifying, implementing, and evaluating effective strategies to improve organizational and operational efficiency. SFPD enjoys a strong professional reputation and offers top-notch equipment and training opportunities for officers and staff – qualities that give the department a clear advantage in implementing the recommendations in this report to address their recruiting and retention challenges.

## 2 OVERVIEW

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### 2.1 ABOUT THE CITY OF SANTA FE



Retrieved from <https://pixabay.com/photos/santa-fe-new-mexico-city-urban-1668455/>

Santa Fe is the capital city of New Mexico with a residential population of 84,612.<sup>2</sup> Santa Fe's rich history predates its colonization in the early 1600s,<sup>3</sup> and has allowed for a booming tourism industry, bringing in 1 million visitors per year.<sup>4</sup> The city was ranked as one of the 14 best places to travel in the United States by Forbes for 2019.<sup>5</sup>

Cost of living is relatively high in Santa Fe compared to the rest of New Mexico. In New

<sup>1</sup> Mayor Alan Webber. (2019). *City of Santa Fe Elected Officials*. Retrieved from [https://www.santafenm.gov/mayor\\_alan\\_webber](https://www.santafenm.gov/mayor_alan_webber)

<sup>2</sup> Quick Facts: Santa Fe city, New Mexico. (2018). *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/santafecitynewmexico>

<sup>3</sup> History. (2019). *TOURISM Santa Fe*. Retrieved from [https://santafe.org/Visiting\\_Santa\\_Fe/Plan\\_Your\\_Trip/History/index.html](https://santafe.org/Visiting_Santa_Fe/Plan_Your_Trip/History/index.html)

<sup>4</sup> Rose, E. (2019). Top 12 things to do in Santa, Fe, New Mexico. Retrieved from <https://www.tripsavvy.com/santa-fe-new-mexico-57588>

<sup>5</sup> Bloom, L. (2018). Where to go next: 14 best places to travel in the US in 2019. *Forbes*. Retrieved from

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2018/12/06/where-to-go-next-best-places-us-travel-2019/#6ed8c0156928>

Mexico, the state cost of living (COL) index is 92.8<sup>6</sup> while in Santa Fe, the overall cost of living (COL) index is 121.4 – this is primarily due to housing costs.<sup>7</sup>

Santa Fe has a strong Mayor form of government, in which the elected Mayor is responsible for day-to-day operations. The Mayor works with a City Manager and eight elected City Councilors.

## **2.2 THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The SFPD has a reputation for being a progressive department that selects excellent recruits and provides regular, high-standard training and top-notch equipment to its rank-and-file personnel. Their proposed annual budget for the past three years averages approximately \$24 million to \$26.7 million per year.<sup>8</sup> Agency management has a positive relationship with the police union, which covers the rank of sergeant, detective, police officer and several civilian personnel. The department has seen several leadership and organizational changes, with some officers reporting they have worked for at least five Chiefs of Police during the past ten years.

## **2.3 STAFFING**

The department is presently budgeted for 173 sworn positions, and 58 civilian staff. At the time of this report, the department had 31 sworn, and 15 civilian vacancies. Fourteen officers are currently awaiting the beginning of or are currently attending the police academy training or are in the field training officer program post academy. With the number of vacancies, and the number of officers attending the law enforcement academy and in the field training program, the number of deployable officers is significantly diminished. Moreover, the SFPD is presently encountering significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining police officers. This difficulty is not unique to Santa Fe, as law enforcement agencies nationwide are experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining law enforcement personnel. However, a combination of unique factors is also contributing to the predicament the SFPD is facing:

- Thirteen SFPD officers have resigned and joined the Albuquerque Police Department (APD), which is located one hour away from Santa Fe. APD is currently under federal monitorship and has undertaken an effective recruiting campaign with a \$5,000 hiring bonus after completing the academy and training.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, APD has initiated a significant raise for the starting salary of police officers to \$29 per hour, where SFPD's starting salary is around \$20 per hour (Note: SFPD is increasing the starting salary to \$22 per hour for lateral officers with a new union contract effective July 1, 2019, while police cadets remain at \$19.11 per hour).
- A significantly lower rate of pay compared to other nearby agencies of comparable size. Accordingly, many newly recruited officers, as well as experienced officers, are considering their options and resigning SFPD positions to work for nearby agencies with better salaries and benefits.

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<sup>6</sup> Cost of Living Data Series Annual Averages 2019. (n.d.). *Missouri Economic Research and Information Center*. Retrieved from [https://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost\\_of\\_living/](https://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost_of_living/)

<sup>7</sup> 2019 Cost of Living Calculator: Santa Fe, New Mexico vs. Albuquerque, New Mexico Best Places. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/santa-fe-nm/albuquerque-nm/62400>

<sup>8</sup> Proposed Annual Budgets FYs 2017-2018 through 2019-2020. (2019). *Santa Fe Police Department*.

<sup>9</sup> Police Officer Recruiting. (n.d.). *Albuquerque Police Department*. Retrieved from <http://apdonline.com/recruiting.aspx>

- Until July 1, 2019, SFPD officers had not seen significant raises in several years.
- Very few officers live in Santa Fe. The majority of police officers live outside the city limits.

The state pension system for all police employees statewide allows officers to carry their pension from city to city within the state, which is an advantage and incentive for officers to leave for higher pay within the same retirement system. However, once an employee retires, they are ineligible to be rehired by another agency within the state pension system, therefore eliminating the possibility of hiring experienced officers retiring in good standing from other agencies in New Mexico. Developing a strategy to retain experienced officers is a significant concern, as the drain on staffing impacts all areas of the department. The shortages are felt in daily operations, personnel deployment, presence at special events, and in retention and recruitment efforts.

## 2.4 ANNEXATION

The City of Santa Fe encompassed 44.8 square miles in 2009. Through three phases of annexation of county property contiguous to the city, the geography increased by over 30%, and the population by almost 23%. Due to these increases, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research recommended an increase of 15 police officers to the police department, an increase from 177 (presently budgeted at 173) officers to 192 officers, in 2011 which has never been realized.<sup>10</sup> Therefore after annexation, SFPD has essentially the same number of authorized officers with a higher population and more area to cover.

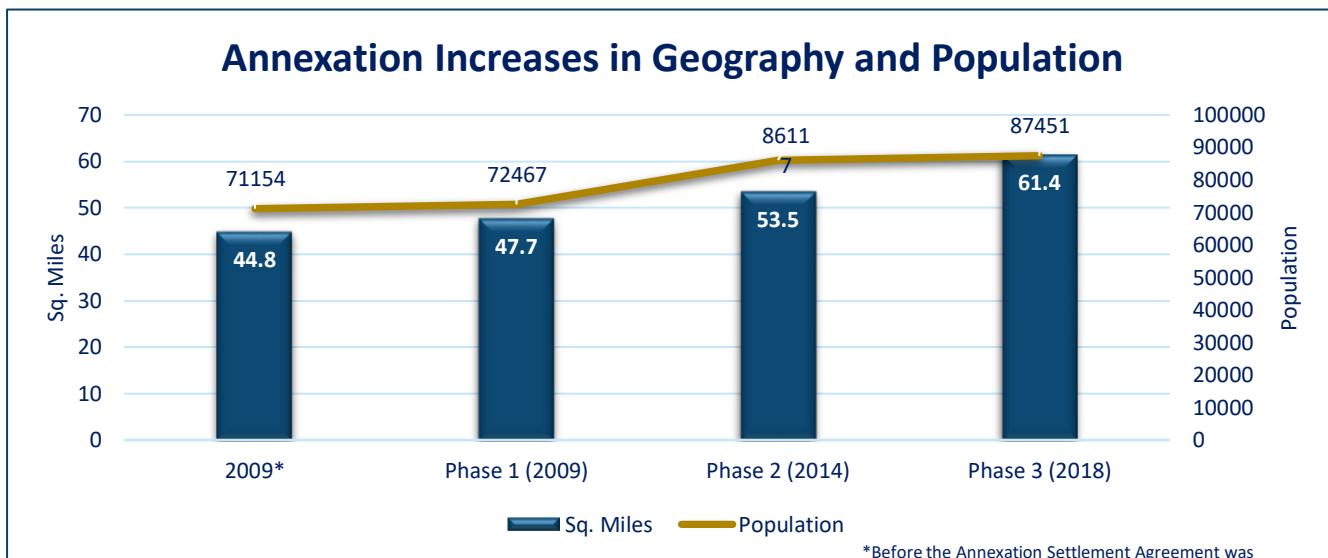


Figure 1. Annexation Increases in Geography and Population. Statistics provided by SFPD.

## 2.5 MANDATORY OVERTIME

According to Chief Padilla, as staffing shortages increased, SFPD began offering voluntary overtime opportunities to officers to fill open patrol shifts.<sup>11</sup> Mandatory overtime has been utilized in response to critical incidents by holding over shifts that are on duty to ensure safe staffing levels. The union contract allows the department to assign mandatory overtime up to 16 total hours per shift if deemed necessary, with normal shifts

<sup>10</sup> Reynis, L., & Bleecker, M. (2011). Analysis of fiscal impacts of phase 2 and phase 3 annexations on the city of Santa Fe. *University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research*.

<sup>11</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews with Deputy Chief Vazquez, July 2, 2019.

being 10 hours long. As officers work more overtime, morale declines, and officer wellness is impacted.<sup>12</sup> SFPD command reported that the department is seeing an increase in the use of sick time, with as many as one or two officers calling in sick for every patrol shift. As a result, officers assigned to administrative tasks are sometimes required to fill open patrol shifts.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, according to the Support Services Section lieutenant, the City of Santa Fe hosts over 200 special events each year requesting additional police services.<sup>14</sup> Previously, a long list of officers interested in working overtime for these events was in place, but now that list is minimal and when those on the list are asked to staff an event, many are not interested. However, SFPD understands the importance of providing a safe environment and that security cannot be compromised. Subsequently, their approach has been adapted to include a combination of both sworn officers from SFPD and civilian security personnel contracted by the event organizer for special events.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

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The National Police Foundation (NPF) team conducted two site visits and interviewed command staff, officers and detectives at each rank, civilian staff, city personnel, elected officials and staff. The team received and reviewed policies/procedures, staffing lists, reports, records, and documents provided by SFPD and conducted a comparison study of employee benefits offered by surrounding law enforcement agencies. The team also reviewed the newly approved union contract and compared it with the prior contract. Additionally, the team conducted several ride alongs with on-duty patrol officers during the swing shift and spoke with officers from the day and graveyard shifts to get a sense of the type of issues patrol officers are dealing with daily, especially with reduced staffing. Furthermore, the NPF team researched nationwide best practices that are being successfully implemented by similar-sized agencies across the country and considered their utility for the concerns in Santa Fe.

## 4 THE FACE OF THE AGENCY

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### 4.1 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

Major television media outlets in the area originate from Albuquerque. Because of this, Santa Fe relies primarily on newspapers and radio for local news coverage. Although they are reliant on the local news sources, the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) has not developed a beneficial relationship with the local media. SFPD does have a Public Information Officer (PIO) with extensive media relations experience. However, the PIO routinely handles Records duties, is not on-call after hours (leaving the shift commander to handle PIO duties at night) and is underutilized. The department does not have a comprehensive public information plan, and as such, the PIO has primarily been responsive, rather than proactive.

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<sup>12</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews with Santa Fe Police Department officers and staff, March 24-27, 2019 and May 21-23, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews Deputy Chief Vazquez, July 2, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews with Santa Fe Police Department Support Services Section, May 25, 2019.

## 4.2 MARKETING

The SFPD has little to no department branding and does not have a marketing plan. As such, the tremendous work and efforts the officers and staff display every day go unrecognized and the department is not capitalizing on the power of positive messaging.

## 4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

The department does operate a Facebook page which is utilized for a variety of different activities, including community service projects, scam notifications, warrants and runaways, and some minimal recruiting. This page has 17,652 “likes.” SFPD has a second Facebook page dedicated specifically to recruiting, although posts on this page are less consistent. There are 1,934 people who “like” the recruitment page. Most posts are videos of new or experienced officers telling their personal stories as to why they chose to work for SFPD. This is a powerful and effective recruiting tool that certainly should be capitalized on, and these stories should be shared through other media avenues. SFPD also uses Twitter and Instagram. They have 4,156 followers on Twitter and 611 on Instagram, although it was unclear whether the Instagram account found was the official account for SFPD since the only social media listed on the SFPD home page are Facebook and Twitter. SFPD social media analytics stand in stark contrast to the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) (See Figure 2). As expected, the APD has a higher number of followers due to serving a much larger population. However, APD adds new posts every day to their social media accounts, where SFPD is less consistent with creating posts and information sharing across all mediums.

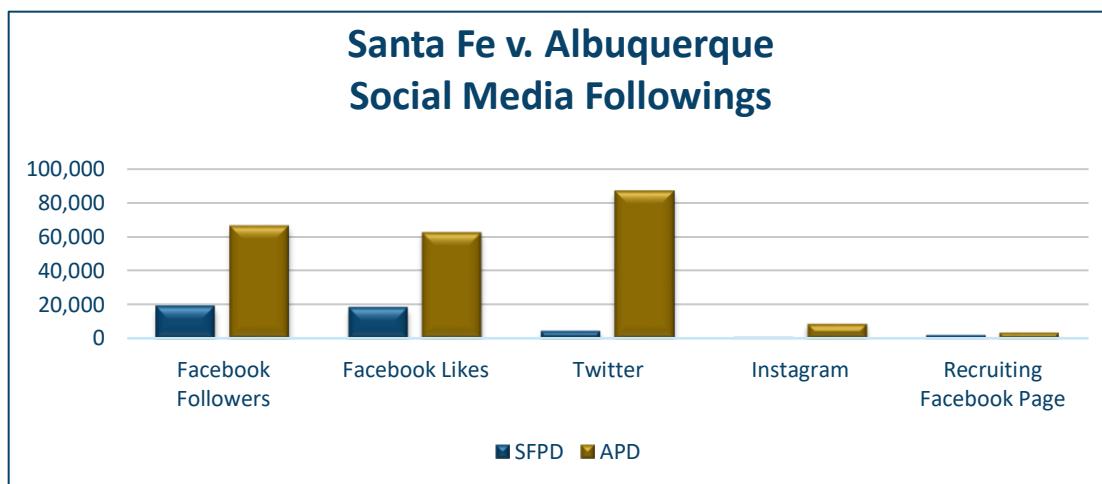
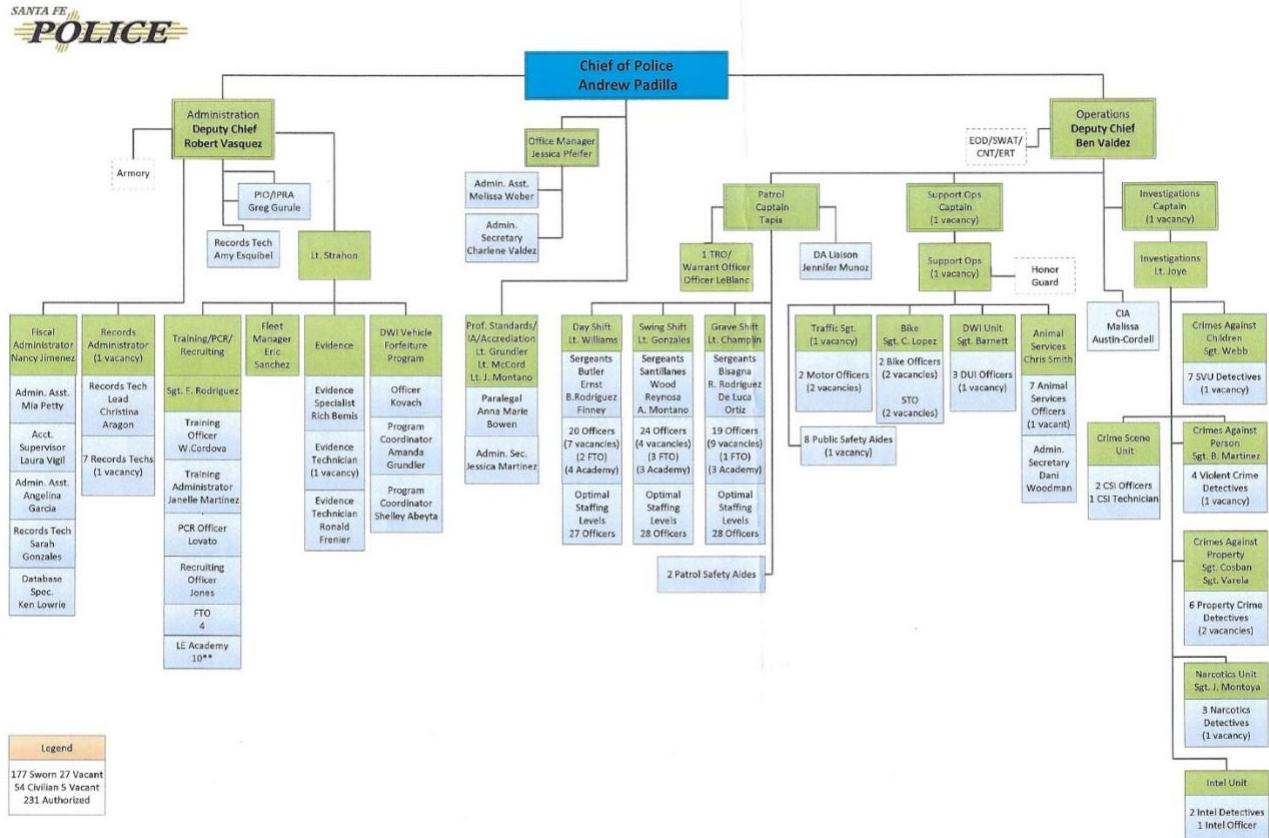


Figure 2. SFPD v. APD Social Media Followings. Comparison completed by NPF Staff, May 2019.

## 5 DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



2/8/19

Figure 3. Santa Fe Organizational Chart. Provided by SFPD, May 21, 2019.

The Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) utilizes a binary organizational structure with the Chief of Police, who has two Deputy Chiefs, Professional Standards Commanders, and an Office Manager as direct reports. One Deputy Chief commands all administrative functions such as Public Information, Records, Finance, Training/Recruiting, Fleet Management, Evidence, and DWI Vehicle Fortitude. The second Deputy Chief commands all operational functions that include Patrol, Criminal Investigations, and Support (i.e., Traffic, Bike, DWI, and Animal Services). SFPD's organizational structure is similar to many police agencies of comparable size. A review of the most current organizational chart reveals that the staffing shortage affects every division, section, and unit within the agency, as virtually every unit is documenting vacancies. At the direction of Chief Padilla, there have been modifications to the organizational chart, such as reclassifying the Operations Support function from a division to a section to relieve some of the pressure from staff shortages. However, these organizational changes have not alleviated manpower issues.

## 5.1 PATROL

SFPD patrol officers work a four day, 10-hour shift schedule. Research has documented improvements in quality of life, job satisfaction, and job involvement for officers assigned to 10-hour shifts.<sup>15</sup> All interviewed officers, supervisors, and managers assigned to patrol enjoy this schedule, as it offers three days off per week. However, some officers did note that because they do not live near Santa Fe, a ten-hour workday is closer to 12 hours when factoring in commuting time before and after their shift. On Wednesday, there are double day and graveyard shifts, and on Thursdays, there is a double swing shift as both shift rotations are in-service.

The Patrol Division is commanded by a captain, with a lieutenant assigned to day shift, swing (afternoon), and graveyard (midnight) shift. Each lieutenant is responsible for four squads, supervised by a sergeant. Two squads are on duty per shift, with one assigned to the north section of the city and the other assigned to the south section, with overlapping times. Additionally, SFPD utilizes Public Safety Aides and Patrol Safety Aides, both civilian positions, to assist patrol and specialized units with non-enforcement tasks.

Lastly, interviewed officers were appreciative of the take-home vehicle program. SFPD allows officers to take home their personally assigned vehicles, with certain restrictions, to increase the number of police units available to respond to urgent calls, increase visibility and presence, enhance the ability to summon off-duty officers in case of an emergency, and to leave the responsibility and care of the vehicle to the officer.<sup>16</sup>

Repeated themes of concern heard from SFPD patrol personnel throughout NPF team assessment interviews included: manpower shortages, pay, and benefits. Priority issues repeated by all interviewed were manpower shortages and the inability to practice proactive or community policing because of call volume.

### 5.1.1 CALLS FOR SERVICE/SELF-INITIATED ACTIVITY

The NPF team reviewed and analyzed crime statistics for dispatched and self-initiated calls from 2014 through 2018. Dispatched calls typically originate from the community, while self-initiated calls are generated by on-duty officers who take law enforcement action based on what they observe.

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<sup>15</sup> Amendola, K., Hamilton, E., Heitmann, A., Shane, J., Ortiz, C., & Tarkghen, E. (2011). The shift length experiment, what we know about 8-, 10-, and 12-hour shifts in policing. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.policefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Shift-Length-Experiment-Practitioner-Guide.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> SFPD Department Policy 87.1.02. (2018). Police Department Vehicles.

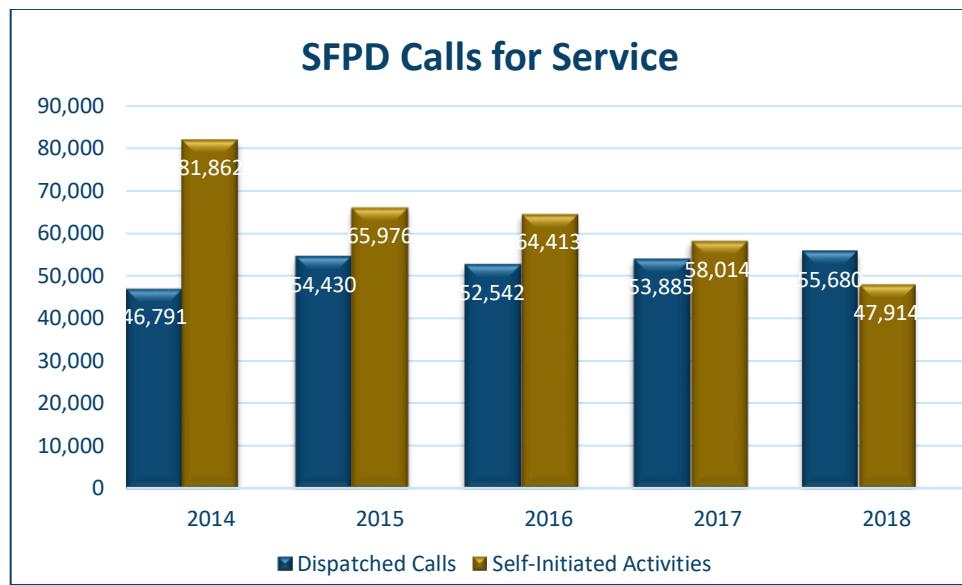


Figure 4. SFPD Calls for Service and Self-Initiated Activity. Provided by SFPD, May 21, 2019.

Analysis reveals that the number of dispatched calls has increased over the past five years while self-initiated activities have decreased. In 2018, the number of dispatched calls surpassed the number of self-initiated activity. SFPD officers are handling more calls for service with less staff, resulting in decreased time and opportunities to conduct self-initiated activity such as proactive patrols or to practice community policing. Additionally, with more time and less manpower devoted to handling calls for service, officers are having difficulty finding time for individualized interaction with the community, therefore lessening opportunities to build positive community contacts and relationships.

The phenomenon is best illustrated by the Bucket Metaphor and Demand for Police Officers (See Figure 5).<sup>17</sup> The current level (in blue) represents the actual number of officers (142). The staffing deficit is the difference between the allocated number of officers (173 when fully staffed) and the current level of police strength (142 officers, excluding 19 new officers in various phases of training). As police staffing levels decrease, unmet demands and workloads increase.

As the bucket (demand) grows larger due to increased calls for service and other expectations of service delivery, the current level (supply of officers) should increase as well, to keep the current level as close to the top as possible. As the bucket drains (due to retirements, voluntary turnover, or separations), unmet demands and services increase. Hiring new officers and slowing attrition increases the level and provides the ability to meet the demand for services and more time to conduct self-initiated activity.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, J., Dalton, E., Scheer, C., & Grammich, C., (2010). Police recruitment and retention for the new millennium: The state of knowledge. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG959.html>

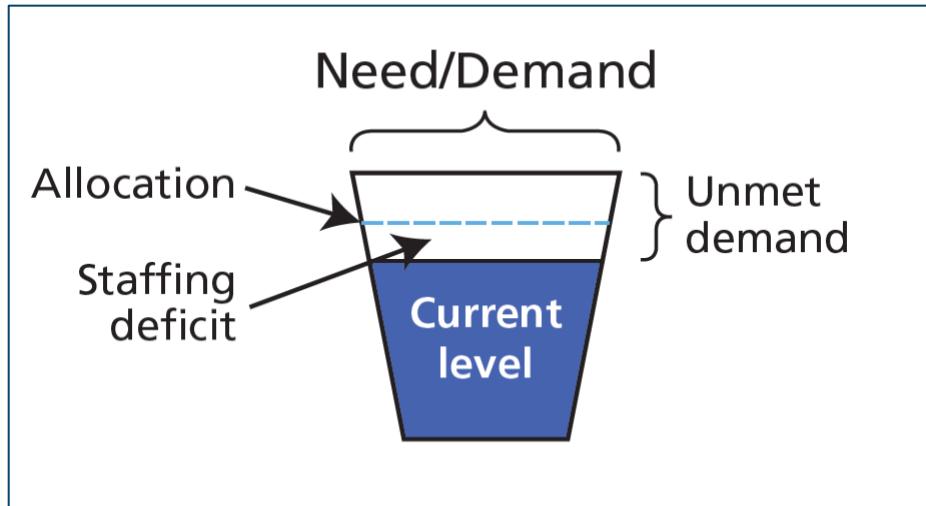


Figure 5. Bucket Metaphor and Demand for Police Officers.

Retrieved from Wilson, J., Dalton, E., Scheer, C., & Grammich, C., (2010).

## 5.2 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The SFPD Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is commanded by a captain with five sergeants assigned to Criminal Intelligence, Violent Crimes and Crime Scene Unit, Property Crimes, Narcotics, and Special Victims/CAC/Human Trafficking Units. CID command, supervisors, and detectives interviewed noted their investigative function, specialization, training, and supervision are consistent with comparable agencies. The division's relationships with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners are professional and positive. Every unit is operating with reduced manpower which has led to increased stress for detectives that are now responsible for more work but with fewer resources.

## 5.3 SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Support Operations is commanded by a lieutenant, with three sergeants supervising the Bike Team, DWI, the and Traffic Unit. A civilian supervisor oversees the Civilian Animal Services Officers. Support Operations is responsible for the operational planning and manning of special events. Safety and security at events are of paramount concern to SFPD and the community. Therefore, SFPD uses various strategies to ensure presence and service at special events. For example, services are often supplemented by security personnel contracted by the event organizer to ensure safety for all operational requests.

## 5.4 CRIME ANALYSIS

Crime analysis capabilities in the deployment and utilization of department personnel are severely underutilized. SFPD has one full-time Crime Analyst. The agency command advised that Intelligence-Led Policing is a priority. Nevertheless, it appears that a disconnect exists with information sharing at all levels. This issue is not unique to SFPD, as implementation of any broad concept can elicit challenges in vision, deployment, communication, and execution throughout the department.

According to the NPF assessment team's interviews with patrol staff, crime information generated by the Crime Analyst or the Criminal Intelligence Unit is not consistently shared with patrol officers or supervisors. An officer may request information from the Crime Analyst, but the majority of those interviewed from different shifts reported they do not have regular access to current crime patterns or trends, or criminal suspects operating

within their areas of responsibility other than what is passed on verbally from officer to officer.<sup>18</sup> Several officers, supervisors, and managers stated that they see a lack of coordination between sections within the department and a lack of coordinated focus on crime issues.

## **5.5 ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION**

The Administrative Lieutenant and one sergeant command the DWI Forfeiture Unit, Community Relations Unit, Training, Field Training Program, Recruiting, and Cadets. The Recruiting Unit has one officer, the Community Relations Unit has one officer, and Training has two officers and a civilian Police Training Coordinator. Given the responsibility of recruiting, community relations, and training the entire department, the Administrative Section, specifically the Recruiting and Community Relations Units, are understaffed. Having one officer assigned to Recruiting and one officer assigned to Community Relations leaves limited resources available to identify and implement innovative solutions for improving recruiting, performing community outreach to youth and other potential recruits, and building positive relationships within the community. SFPD recently assigned another full-time officer to the Administrative Section to assist the Recruiting, Community Relations, and Training Units to reduce the workload.

## **6 RECRUITMENT**

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Due to a lack of qualified recruits, a limited recruiting strategy, and competition from outside agencies, the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) is having immense difficulty filling open positions within the department. At present, the SFPD recruitment program is operating at an extremely limited capacity. In addition, while the department recently revamped their recruiting website, adding a page focused on recruitment activity, it is not the site that Internet searchers are most directed to and provides limited community outreach. There is limited use of the SFPD primary Facebook page for this purpose and their recruiting page is underutilized.

### **6.1 ON-BOARDING PROCESS**

A key issue is finding recruits who can pass the various skill tests and background investigation. SFPD conducts monthly physical agility and writing skills testing but is not getting the number of qualified candidates they had hoped for. According to the SFPD Recruiting Officer, the vast majority of applicants that show up for testing have issues passing the writing skills test and/or the physical agility test. Others that do move forward in the process are lost in the background investigation phase.<sup>19</sup> SFPD accepts lateral hires as well, but lately, the majority of lateral applicants are officers with disciplinary histories from other departments or have other issues that render them incompatible for hire.<sup>19</sup> For applicants without experience, SFPD cannot attract quality candidates that want to work for \$19.11 per hour (Note: SFPD is increasing the starting salary to \$22 per hour for lateral officers with a new union contract effective July 1, 2019). This is especially the case when compared to Albuquerque Police Department (APD) who currently offers \$29 per hour upon completion of the academy and first-year probationary period (during the probationary period, APD new hires receive \$21.27 per hour, and laterals receive \$28 per hour).<sup>20</sup> On a recent testing day, 16 candidates were scheduled, six showed up, two passed and proceeded to the background phase, of which neither are expected to pass.

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<sup>18</sup> Recurring theme garnered from National Police Foundation assessment team interviews conducted with multiple units, March 24-27, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interview with Recruiting Officer, May 21, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Salary. (n.d.). *Albuquerque Police Department*. Retrieved from <http://apdonline.com/salary.aspx>

## 6.2 RECRUITING UNIT

SFPD has a Recruiting Officer assigned to the Administrative Section who does not have time to execute recruitment duties because the vast majority of time is consumed with conducting background checks for new hires, of which 175 have been completed in the last two- and one-half years.<sup>21</sup> Each background check can take up to two months to complete. At one time, SFPD had two full time Recruiting Officers and a more robust recruiting program. Tasked with these other duties, the Recruiting Officer has limited time to perform the essential functions of the job, which should be conducting recruiting activities such as community outreach, attending hiring events, and developing a more robust recruitment plan. To add to this predicament, the current Recruiting Officer is retiring soon and personnel interviewed by the NPF assessment team had no knowledge of a succession plan.

One effort the agency has made to entice lateral transfers is offering a \$3,000 hiring bonus (with 2 years of experience or more) and a \$1000 bonus for recruits. The agency advertises this incentive on their website but was not able to fulfill their promise, which led to resentment, animosity, and contention for officers who were promised the bonus upon hire but did not receive a bonus after several months. Many officers noted that the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) is offering a higher hiring bonus and paying it. Update: While some interviewed by the assessment team reported this delay in receiving bonuses due to a 10-month administrative delay, bonuses are now being paid on schedule.<sup>22</sup>

## 6.3 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The SFPD currently has one officer assigned to Community Policing. A private company provides security for the school district. Therefore, SFPD does not employ school resource officers or have relationships with students in high schools. The only potential contact officers have with students during school hours is calls for service, most of which are not positive interactions.

Although SFPD does not currently have a Police Explorer Program, plans for creating a program are in progress. SFPD does host interns from Santa Fe Community College and Highlands University and engages with the criminal justice professors and students in various ways on a regular basis. However, opportunities to strengthen these relationships always exist and should continually be explored. Recently SFPD has made inroads in establishing contacts and relationships within local high schools. Building and fostering these relationships is critical both to positively engaging youth and building relationships and to recruitment efforts for SFPD.<sup>23</sup>

The SFPD Recruiting Facebook page has videos of SFPD officers, many of whom grew up in the community, sharing their stories as to why they appreciate serving the citizens of Santa Fe. Their personal stories are a powerful testament to their dedicated service. Potential candidates, of any age, want to hear these personal affirmations when deciding if the SFPD is right for them.

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<sup>21</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interview with Recruiting Officer, May 21, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Per NPF Assessment Team call with Mayor Webber and Chief Padilla, August 23, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2009). *Law enforcement recruitment toolkit*. Washington, D.C.

## 6.4 OFFICER/STAFF PERCEPTION

The NPF team spoke with recruits, recently hired trainees, officers assigned to Patrol and others in the department regarding living in or near Santa Fe. Officers and staff shared that Santa Fe is an expensive city to live in and that housing options are limited on a police officer's salary. Not many activities are available for families and many conveyed that there are school districts that are better for their children than those in Santa Fe. Personnel who live in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and other cities report they purchased nice homes at reasonable prices and have a lifestyle that is affordable and family-friendly. Considering that SFPD does not pay as much as other nearby police departments, it makes it difficult to entice recruits or lateral transfers to work in a city they are not likely able to afford to live in, lengthening their commuting time.

Conversely, the NPF team asked why recruits, officers, and trainees came to SFPD. Several had opportunities and offers to work with other law enforcement agencies but chose SFPD because they appreciated the ability to work for a smaller agency where everyone knows each other and where they do not feel like a number. Others were legacy hires – serving in the footsteps of their relatives who were SFPD officers. Several enjoy the ability to handle calls and work cases to completion, where with a larger agency patrol officers often take reports and turn cases over to investigative units.

## 6.5 COST OF RECRUITMENT

The expense for any law enforcement agency to recruit, on-board, equip, and train a police officer cannot be underestimated. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the significant financial costs that SFPD incurs for a new recruit. In 2018, out of 145 candidates that tested for a non-certified police officer cadet, 43 passed the written test, oral board, and physical agility test. Of those 43, 28 were disqualified in the background process, and 15 were hired. For laterals (candidates with law enforcement experience), 21 tested and 4 were hired.<sup>24</sup> Although a minority of applicants are hired, SFPD is responsible for the costs incurred during all phases of the application process. From the time an applicant submits their application to the time the applicant becomes a fully trained police officer capable of functioning independently, the SFPD spends over \$120k (including a take-home vehicle) and invests over one and a half years of time, manpower, and effort.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, SFPD incurs the full cost of a recruit's attendance to the Law Enforcement Training Academy and their salary while in training.<sup>24</sup> No financial consequences exist for recruits to quit employment with SFPD at any time and join another law enforcement agency.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> SFPD Recruiting End of Year presentation (2018).

Expenses for a Newly hired Cadet (Pre-Academy through Field Training)				
	Salary	Benefits (45%)	Equipment	Total
Recruiter (160 Hours)	\$ 4,343.04	\$ 6,297.41		
Psychologist			\$ 340.00	
Polygrapher			\$ 270.00	
Drug and Alcohol, Medical			\$ 309.00	
160 hours pre-academy (4 weeks)	\$ 3,058.24	\$ 4,434.45		
640 hours academy (16 weeks)	\$ 12,232.96	\$ 17,737.79		
560 hours Field Training Officer (14 weeks)	\$ 10,703.84	\$ 15,520.57		
Academy Uniforms			\$ 414.35	
Street Uniforms			\$ 809.35	
Additional Issued Equipment			\$ 1,500.00	
Ballistic vest			\$ 800.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 30,338.08</b>	<b>\$ 43,990.22</b>	<b>\$ 4,442.70</b>	<b>\$ 48,432.92*</b>
<b>*Total per New Hire</b>				

Figure 6. Expenses for Newly hired Cadet Pre-Academy through Field Training. Provided by SFPD, May 21, 2019.

Expenses for Newly hired Cadet (First Year after Completion of Field Training)				
	Salary	Benefits (69%)	Equipment	Total
Cadet (2080 hours)	\$ 39,757.12	\$ 57,647.82		
Car			\$ 47,281.00	
Additional equipment			\$ 11,618.16	
Pre-hire equipment			\$ 4,442.70	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 39,757.12</b>	<b>\$ 57,647.82</b>	<b>\$ 63,341.86</b>	<b>\$ 120,989.68*</b>

Figure 7. Expenses for Newly hired Cadet First Year after FT Completed. Provided by SFPD, May 21, 2019.

## 7 RETENTION

When the NPF assessment team first met with personnel in Santa Fe, they quickly learned that leadership's paramount concern is recruitment and retention. They believe the issue is rooted in pay – particularly due to the pay increases in Albuquerque required by the Federal Monitorship. This belief is not unfounded considering that research supports that salary and benefits are a fundamental reason that new recruits accept employment with a particular agency.<sup>25</sup> Albuquerque Police Department (APD) has increased its pay scales significantly, causing 13 lateral moves from SFPD to APD. For some officers, the availability of alternative employment is a primary variable in the decision-making process to change employment, especially if other variables such as decreased job satisfaction and occupational stress are present.<sup>26</sup>

These lateral transfers away from SFPD contribute to “brain-drain,” a term coined to describe the loss of experienced personnel in an organization.<sup>27</sup> Police organizations, in particular, suffer from this when lack of retention of quality officers means loss of those who understand the agency’s unique culture, characteristics, and services as well as the technical knowledge, understanding of the community and experience to do the job well.<sup>27</sup> Most agencies experience a degree of “brain-drain” due to retirement, but it is particularly concerning when officers with considerable experience and knowledge leave an agency prematurely. The loss is felt not only in the department but also by the community they serve.

Due to the proximity of Santa Fe to Albuquerque, the pay increases in Albuquerque are especially attractive to Santa Fe officers because they do not need to relocate to take the job. The importance of pay is exacerbated by the high cost of living in Santa Fe. The vast majority of officers, including the Chief and both Deputy Chiefs, do not live within the city limits. Furthermore, benefits offered to SFPD officers have become more expensive with increased insurance rates, essentially negating any potential pay increases negotiated by the union.

### 7.1 CURRENT STATE

Through retirement, dismissals, and resignations, the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) has a significant number of vacancies. It is important to note that this is not unique to SFPD as this is a problem experienced nationally by many agencies. Figure 8 shows that in most years since 2012, the SFPD has lost more officers than they have hired. This was more prominent in 2018, and the number is expected to increase even more in 2019 if action is not taken. Eight officers are eligible to retire in the next year. Several officers, supervisors, and management-level staff have said they are waiting to see if changes will be made but will leave if the pay is not significantly increased in the near future. For example, an officer explained that with his level of experience, he can go to the Albuquerque Police Department, which is closer to home and family, receive 100 hours of vacation

<sup>25</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2006). *Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Update, Peace Officer Standards and Training*. Sacramento, CA.

<sup>26</sup> Cotton, J., & Tuttle, J. (1986). Employee turnover: A meta-analysis and review with implications for research. *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 55-70.

<sup>27</sup> Rosenblatt, Z., & Sheaffer, Z. (2001). Brain drain in declining organizations: Toward a research agenda. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22(4), 409-424.

## Officers Hired by v. Left SFPD

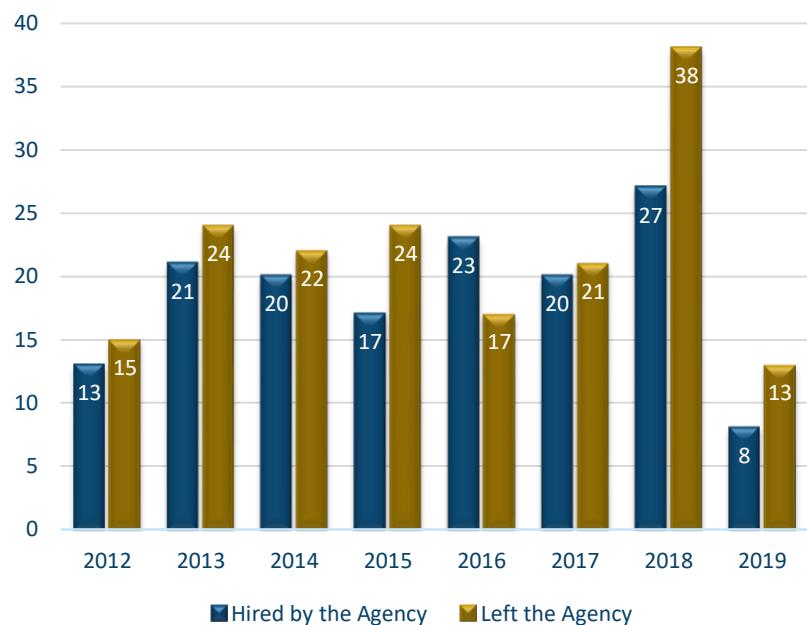


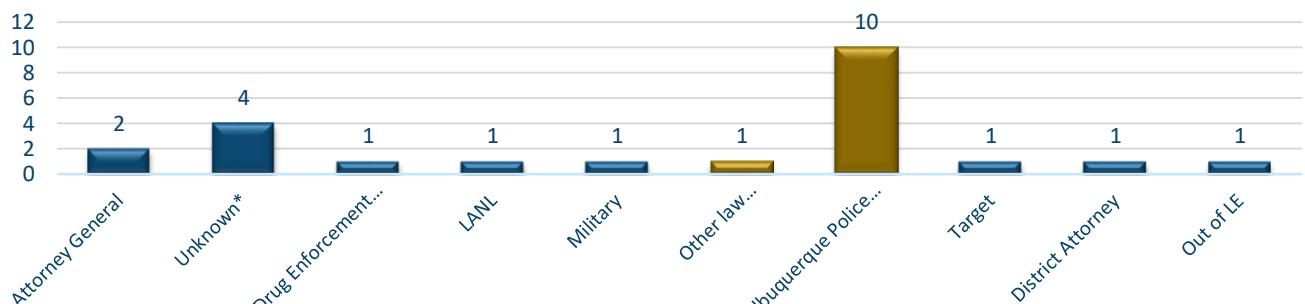
Figure 8. Officers Hired v. Left SFPD. Provided by SFPD.

and 40 hours of sick leave, keep his seniority, have better benefits, and take home almost \$1,500 more each paycheck. He loves SFPD and does not want to leave but will not have a choice unless the department and the city take the problem seriously and makes substantial adjustments. Many officers echoed this sentiment. SFPD has lost 13 officers to APD in the last 18 months, with several more in the employment process having left for other law enforcement agencies (see Figures 9 and 10). Another officer noted that as other agencies are raising the bar, SFPD has been “kicking the can down the road.”

The NPF team would like to note that SFPD is recruiting officers with the desire and skill

sets to serve the citizens of Santa Fe but are having the most difficulty keeping officers at every level long-term. Many officers and staff appreciate the family atmosphere of SFPD and the level of training. However, most were honest in expressing their primary concern regarding staffing shortages and the pay disparity.

## 2018 Reasons for Voluntary Resignation



\*Does not include unknown who were rehired

Figure 9. 2018 Reasons for Resignation. Provided by SFPD.

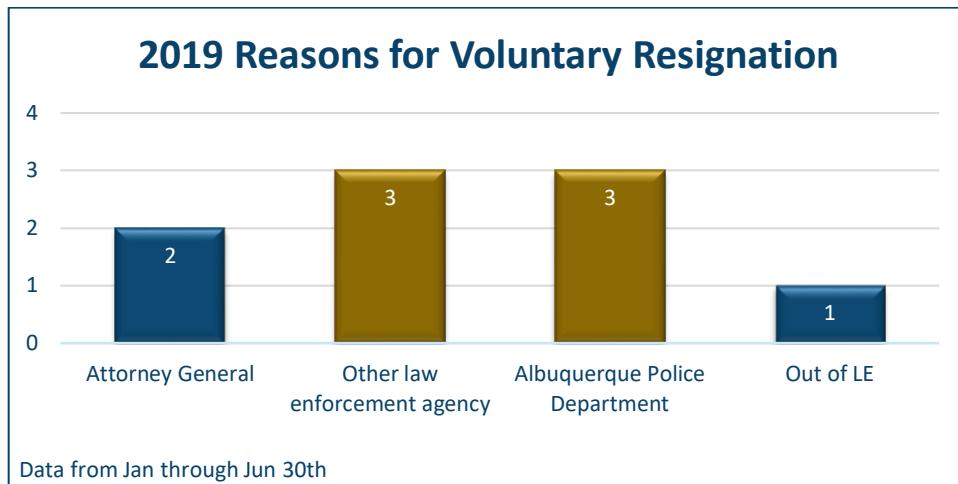


Figure 10. 2019 Reasons for Resignation. Provided by SFPD.

## 7.2 CULTURE OF THE SANTA FE POLICE DEPARTMENT

While the pay disparity at SFPD is obvious, when the NPF assessment team asked SFPD rank-and-file to give their thoughts on leadership and the organization as a whole, they also cited other issues, including a perceived lack of respect, poor communication, and lack of recognition.<sup>28</sup> The revolving door of police chiefs was frequently cited as the cause of constant stress, as every new chief has different expectations and visions. This constant change, according to officers and staff, has resulted in an unclear mission and direction for some in the department. Retirements and voluntary turnover have created opportunities for advancement with new supervisors and managers assuming leadership positions, leading some to perceive that some individuals promoted did not have the preparation, experience, or skill sets for their new positions.

The current executive command staff all rose through the ranks of SFPD and inherited some of the critical issues the department is currently facing. Many officers reported that they are tasked with assignments from Deputy Chiefs who are not their assigned Deputy Chief, as well as from the Chief. Others stated they receive unclear direction and mixed signals from the executive command. Although these sentiments can be common within police agencies, and many organizations more generally, command staff should be cognizant of this dynamic.

SFPD has undergone several organizational structure changes and an agency reorganization since Chief Padilla was appointed. Some units used to be their own sections but now have fewer officers and staff, with more responsibilities and required tasks. Virtually every supervisor/manager interviewed said their most prominent grievance was managing their responsibilities with less manpower. These supervisors and leaders understand management decisions but believe that a double standard exists and that rules are not applied evenly. They said they would encourage executive command to spend more time with the rank-and-file to gain perspective and input.

<sup>28</sup> All organizations, including police departments, are comprised of human beings who hold unique and differing opinions and perceptions. The NPF team has done its best to represent those opinions and perceptions here.

## **7.3 OUTSIDE ENTITIES**

Officers, supervisors, managers, and staff mostly relay the same sentiment about city administration and city council. They feel that, historically, City Hall has had minimal understanding and appreciation for the police department. Their perception and opinion are that this lack of attention and/or lack of consistent leadership from the city over many years has led, in part, to the current situation.

## **7.4 AGENCY FACILITIES**

Personnel brought up two primary issues regarding facilities at the department. First, parking is limited. They are provided with take-home cars, but there is limited space to park them at work. Second, the sewers often back up into the department, causing unsanitary issues.

## **7.5 AGENCY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING**

Virtually every interviewed SFPD member praised the equipment issued to them and the level of training received. All sworn personnel have take-home patrol cars, body and in-car cameras, tasers, and patrol rifles. Many officers rated in-service training as superior and the ability to attend specialized training was cited as excellent.

## **7.6 PROMOTIONS AND ADVANCEMENT**

Due to retirements and several supervisors leaving for other agencies, opportunities for promotion have increased. There were no issues or complaints about the promotional process, other than a few officers who expressed their opinion that some newly promoted supervisors and/or managers were not prepared and lacked leadership abilities necessary for their new positions. Also, some officers perceive that the executive command exercises favoritism in selecting individuals for promotion.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, supervisors noted a pay compression issue where some senior patrol officers are being paid more than new sergeants. The pay compression issues between the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant have been recently corrected.<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, advancement and assignment to a specialty unit is a common frustration for both officers aspiring to work these assignments and supervisors to lead these units. The inability to fill vacant positions due to staffing shortages forces these units to perpetually work short-staffed. Officers with an interest in working these assignments must wait until positions are available.<sup>29</sup>

## **7.7 UNION CONTRACT**

During the NPF Team's work with SFPD, the City of Santa Fe, and the Santa Fe Police Union agreed on a new contract with several changes in pay/benefits (Effective July 1, 2019). Changes include:

- Increase from \$600 to \$650 clothing allowance (\$700 for Bicycle, Special Ops, Motorcycle personnel)
- Reclassification:
  - Removal of Police Officer 3 and 4, and Police Detective 2 steps

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<sup>29</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews with the Santa Fe Police Department supervisor, March 24-27, 2019 and May 21-23, 2019.

- Officers reach Senior Police Officer in 5 years instead of 7 years
- Police officers starting salaries were raised two percent or the minimum of classification pay rate, whichever is greater, from \$19.11 per hour to:
  - Police Officer I – Starting pay \$22 per hour / 1-2 years
  - Police Officer II – Starting pay \$25 per hour / 3-4 years
  - Police Detective – Starting pay \$30 per hour / 3 years
  - Senior Police Officer – Starting pay \$30 per hour / 5 years
  - Police Sergeant – Starting pay \$33 per hour / 7 years
- Non-sworn positions received a four percent increase, or the minimum of classification pay rate, whichever is greater.
  - Removal of classifications of Police Officer III, Police Detective II, Public Safety Aide II, Animal Services Officer II, and Crime Scene Technician II

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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To effectively address current recruiting and retention challenges, the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD) must invest and commit to a long-term strategy that will take time and significant effort to produce positive results. The National Police Foundation (NPF) and the SFPD collectively recognize that there are no simple or easy solutions given current SFPD staffing shortages and priorities, and some recommendations require personnel and funding to achieve. However, all recommendations should be considered and prioritized to implement a focused and durable recruiting and retention plan.

### 8.1 UNION CONTRACT

**Recommendation 8.1.1.: The SFPD should maintain a positive relationship with the City of Santa Fe and the Union, and obtain honest feedback from employees at every level, to include new recruits and civilian staff.**

SFPD should continue working with the City and Police Union to determine if the agreed upon changes in pay/benefits will increase the number of qualified police applicants and stem the flow of attrition from SFPD. Furthermore, the SFPD should consistently survey or otherwise research SFPD personnel to better understand their officers. The department may also gain quality recruiting ideas, particularly from young officers systematically asked for their input.

### 8.2 CIVILIANIZATION AND STAFFING ASSESSMENT

**Recommendation 8.2.1: The SFPD should develop a multi-year action plan to civilianize units.**

The agency has considered identifying duties and positions that could be filled by civilian staff to supplement sworn staff. The NPF team supports this plan, which follows national trends and research that has indicated many benefits of using civilian employees. Civilian employees are less expensive than sworn officers in terms of salary, retirement, and benefits.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, civilians may also bring specialized skills or formal training that officers might not possess.<sup>31</sup> The NPF does suggest that the incorporation of more civilian staff is not abrupt,

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<sup>30</sup> Martin, L. (2009). Leadership from the outside: Civilianizing command structure in modern law enforcement." *Journal of California Law Enforcement* 43(1), 19-24.

<sup>31</sup> King, W. R., & Wilson, J. M. (2014). Integrating civilian staff into police agencies. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

but transitional and completed under careful study of the positions and tasks. An example may be reviewing the duties of police officers assigned to Crime Scene/Evidence. With years of experience, and tremendous financial investment of specialized training, replacing these officers with untrained civilian personnel would be a huge financial commitment and loss of specialized knowledge. SFPD should consider phasing the positions to civilian status upon retirement or transfer.

In the meantime, SFPD should continue to utilize Public and Patrol Safety Aides, both civilian positions, as these positions can be a cost-effective way to deliver police services as well as serve as a potential pipeline for future officers.

**Recommendation 8.2.2: The SFPD should conduct a more comprehensive and quantitative workload assessment/staffing study.**

SFPD command is interested in determining if current sworn/civilian personnel ratios are efficient and if opportunities exist to determine appropriate staffing ratios and levels and whether they are proportionate based on workload, community policing, and service priority. There is no one size fits all approach to determine how a police department should be staffed, as each agency is dedicated to providing police services to unique and diverse communities with different expectations.

The scope of this project was qualitative in design (i.e., gaining insights and perspectives from the agency). Once a plan is implemented to address current challenges, SFPD should conduct a comprehensive workload assessment that is more quantitative to determine if the organizational structure is appropriate and if staffing is deployed most efficiently to achieve goals, reduce crime, and better serve the citizens of and visitors to Santa Fe. A quantitative assessment would involve more in-depth statistical analysis of multiple years of calls for service data as well as staffing levels on a monthly or more frequent basis and would take into consideration time, space and other factors to determine and project optimal staffing levels today and in the future.

The International City/County Management Association Center for Public Safety Management (ICMA/CPSM) is a widely accepted methodology of conducting workload analysis for making staffing determinations, and provides guidance in conducting research-based and data-driven workload analysis and recommends the “Rule of 60:”<sup>32</sup>

- 60 percent of the total number of officers should be assigned to Patrol.
- Handling calls for service should not exceed 60 percent of an officer’s on-duty time. The remaining 40 percent is discretionary for officers to address community problems.
- The Total Service Time (officer-minutes) should not exceed a factor of 60.

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<sup>32</sup> McCabe, J. (2013). “An Analysis of Police Department Staffing: How Many Officers Do You Really Need?” *ICMA Center for Public Safety Management White Paper*. [https://icma.org/sites/default/files/305747\\_Analysis%20of%20Police%20Department%20Staffing%20\\_%20McCabe.pdf](https://icma.org/sites/default/files/305747_Analysis%20of%20Police%20Department%20Staffing%20_%20McCabe.pdf)

## 8.3 CRIME ANALYSIS/INFORMATION SHARING

**Recommendation 8.3.1: The Crime Analysis Unit should be an integral part of day-to-day operations and should be staffed accordingly.**

Currently, the majority of the Crime Analyst's time and resources are dedicated to record-keeping and creating year-end reports. Instead, the Crime Analyst should be used to aid in the daily development and dissemination of a Crime Analysis Brief to be delivered during shift briefings.

The SFPD management-level crime meetings should integrate the crime analysis unit into these discussions to develop a more robust strategy to disseminate crime information to officers. Obtaining, analyzing and sharing current crime trends with officers on the street is the foundation of Intelligence-Led Policing. Research shows that law enforcement collaboration without information sharing will provide limited success.<sup>33</sup> Information is only effective if it is getting to the officers charged with maintaining public safety.

## 8.4 MAINTAIN TRAINING

**Recommendation 8.4.1: The SFPD should continue the quality and consistency of provided police training, and as staffing improves, specialty training be made more readily available.**

The NPF team heard from several officers who felt the training provided by SFPD is exceptional. Research suggests that departments that encourage learning and training may assist in retaining officers. Training allows officers to learn new skills and hone existing ones, all of which can contribute to making an officer feel that the department is invested in their professional development and decrease the likelihood of officers looking to other agencies where learning and training are encouraged.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, several SFPD officers did relay that the ability to attend specialized training is often hampered by manpower shortages on their squads.

## 8.5 REVAMP RECRUITMENT/RETENTION STRATEGIES

The NPF team emphasizes that there is no short-term solution to recruiting and retention challenges and encourages the formulation of a long-term, committed strategy to include, community outreach, marketing, creating a recruiting unit, identifying and utilizing agency mentors, modifying the selection and on-boarding process, and implementing a signing bonus.

### 8.5.1 Community Outreach

**Recommendation 8.5.1.1: The SFPD should utilize every opportunity to develop positive relationships with all facets of the community.**

Innovative initiatives are utilized nationwide to help new police officers foster relationships in the communities they serve. An example of an innovative program was initiated by Chief Orlando Rolon of the Orlando Police Department in Florida, who understands that for officers to serve the community they must know the community. Each new police recruit goes into the neighborhood they patrol and introduces themselves to community members. These efforts provide a foundation for community service, builds trust and perspective,

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<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. (2008). *Reducing crime through intelligence-led policing*. Retrieved from <https://www.bja.gov/Publications/ReducingCrimeThroughILP.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> McHenry, M. K. (n.d.). A need for change: The importance of continued training and education for modern day police officers. *Criminal Justice Institute*.

and allows officers to learn firsthand of community challenges and issues.<sup>35</sup> Innovative ideas such as this may take some time to implement and ingrain into the culture of the agency. Not only will progressive programs assist with recruitment, but they could potentially improve community interactions. Having SFPD officers and staff positively engage with the community assists in the branding of the agency as a department that citizens can rely on and a great place to work.

Community outreach should also include hosting special events and meetings within diverse communities. For example, open houses, tours of the SFPD, summer programs, and Civilian Police Academies, are all popular and has been proven effective with police recruiting efforts.<sup>36</sup> SFPD advised that the agency currently undertakes a number of community outreach programs, including hosting holiday events, conducting station tours, and engaging with the community in activities like “Shop with a Cop,” “Coffee with a Cop,” and National Night Out. As an element of an effective marketing campaign, SFPD should also make a concentrated effort to highlight and advertise their participation in more effective ways to showcase their community involvement.

***Recommendation 8.5.1.2: The SFPD should continue to build on engagement in the community at all age levels to strengthen the foundation for police recruiting efforts.***

Many officers and staff noted that there are not many activities for children and teenagers to do in Santa Fe. Police Explorer Programs, week-long summer camps, Teen Police Academies, and other positive interactions with students have all proven effective with other police agencies and can be easily implemented.<sup>36</sup> A promising program utilized by the Western Springs Police Department in Illinois is a Police Academy geared toward sixth, seventh, and eighth-graders. The week-long summer camp offers attendees the opportunity to conduct simulated traffic stops, process crime scenes, understand the investigative process, and learn about the day-to-day operations of the police department.<sup>36</sup> Historically, SFPD has not had a consistent presence in the Santa Fe school system, but have begun to make progress in building relationships with youth through the school system. SFPD must find avenues to increase positive interactions with students at every level to build trust, interest in the profession and the SFPD, which may serve as an untapped resource for recruiting in the future.

## **8.5.2 Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy**

***Recommendation 8.5.2.1: The SFPD should develop a comprehensive marketing plan.***

SFPD’s key focus of the marketing strategy should be the branding of SFPD. A good brand is all-encompassing, creating a positive emotional and physical response.<sup>37</sup> Another aspect of branding is differentiating from other similar organizations.<sup>37</sup> The agency should advertise the strengths and benefits of the agency that will entice recruits to join. Testimonials from officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and other SFPD staff about the excellent equipment, superb training, and close-knit culture, are effective mechanisms for enticing potential recruits. Advertisements can include brochures and other related materials that can be easily handed out at events and interactions with the public.

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<sup>35</sup> Castro, A. (2018). Orlando police launch new initiative to introduce recruits to community, New police chief hopes to build relationships with community members. *WKM*. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/orlando-police-launch-new-initiative-to-introduce-recruits-to-the-community>

<sup>36</sup> Paul N. (2019). Western Springs to offer police academy for sixth through eighth graders.” *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/western-springs/ct-dws-youth-police-academy-tl-0620-story.html>

<sup>37</sup> Phibbs, W. M. (2017). Why your police department needs a brand. *PoliceOne*. Retrieved from <https://www.policeone.com/chiefs-sheriffs/articles/417437006-Why-your-police-department-needs-a-brand/>

Another important aspect of the marketing plan is highlighting the mission of the department. Several officers, staff, and supervisors felt that there is not a clear mission, despite having a mission statement posted on the website. Developing a new mission statement with actionable goals, committing to that mission, and ensuring it is regularly repeated through various mediums throughout the department could show potential recruits that the agency has a clear path for career satisfaction and advancement.

Lastly, SFPD's marketing campaign should include information on what the city of Santa Fe has to offer from the natural beauty of the city, to outdoor activities, and quality of life. This will be particularly helpful for potential recruits that are not from Santa Fe.

***Recommendation 8.5.2.2: The SFPD should utilize their recruitment website and social media page more effectively to expand their reach and strengthen their recruiting efforts.***

Although the use of social media and the agency website should not be the primary focus of recruitment, they are important tools in the agency's toolkit to integrate within the larger marketing strategy. Research indicates that many law enforcement agencies are not utilizing the Internet and social media as tools to recruit applicants.<sup>38</sup> Yet, an online presence is a significant and influential factor pertaining to recruitment.<sup>39</sup> Younger generations who have grown up with technology are technologically and Internet savvy, and the SFPD should utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, Twitter, etc., to target these younger candidates. Additionally, these social media platforms can be utilized at no cost and reach wide audiences.

SFPD recently revamped their recruiting website which is visually appealing, easy to navigate, and comparable to other agencies. However, the outdated SFPD recruiting page still exists on the City website. We recommend removing that link and creating an automatic redirection to the new recruiting website. A basic Google search using the term "Santa Fe Police Recruiting" brings users to the outdated city website at <https://www.santafenm.gov/police> instead of the new [sfpdonline.com](http://sfpdonline.com). Although a link to the new website does exist, initial impressions are critical, and candidates may lose interest before finding the link. Within the last month (June/July 2019), 157 users accessed the new SFPD Recruiting website and the department had 24 inquiries for additional information.<sup>40</sup>

Figure 11 below provides a side-by-side comparison of SFPD's new recruiting website (left) with its strongest competitor, the Albuquerque Police Department (right).

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<sup>38</sup> Helldorfer, K. L., (2016). I can haz applicants: An analysis of police recruitment and marketing through social media. Master's Theses. *The University of Southern Mississippi*. 1-90.

<sup>39</sup> Kilburn, M., & Krieger, L. (2014). Policing in an information age: The prevalence of state and local law enforcement agencies utilising the world wide web to connect with the community. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 16 (3), 221-227.

<sup>40</sup> NPF Team discussion with Deputy Chief Vazquez, July 22, 2019.

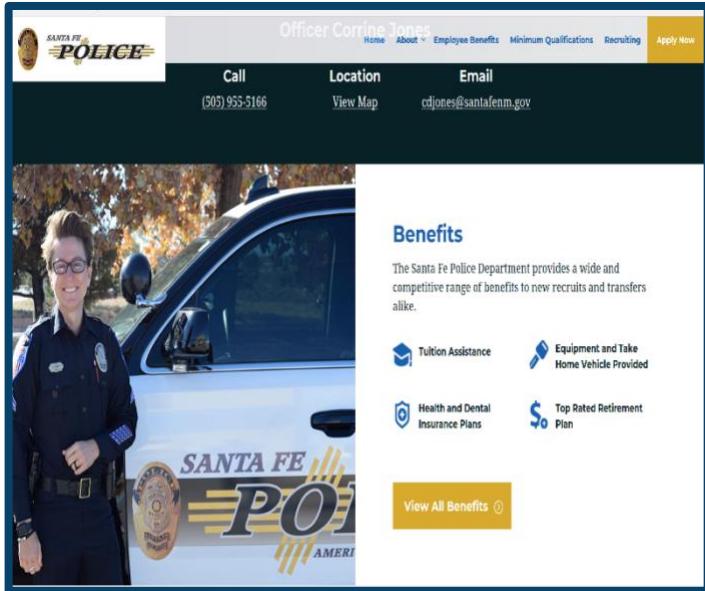


Figure 11. SFPD Recruitment Website v. APD Recruitment Website. Accessed by NPF Staff, May 2019.

SFPD should also consider adding a video segment/introduction from the Chief of Police. The Chief's video message should welcome potential recruits to the website and invite them to learn more about the opportunities available in the agency. Another consideration is to offer an online chat option as an additional opportunity for candidates to engage with agency recruiters.

Additionally, SFPD should consider utilizing video testimonials of current officers and staff to strengthen their recruiting message and add additional department pictures to the selection process link. SFPD already uses these testimonials on their Recruiting Facebook page, as these personalized testimonials can be a powerful tool to gain interest from potential candidates. Furthermore, SFPD is a diverse agency and should highlight its family atmosphere, similar to the University of Central Florida Police Department's campaign highlighted below in Figure 12.

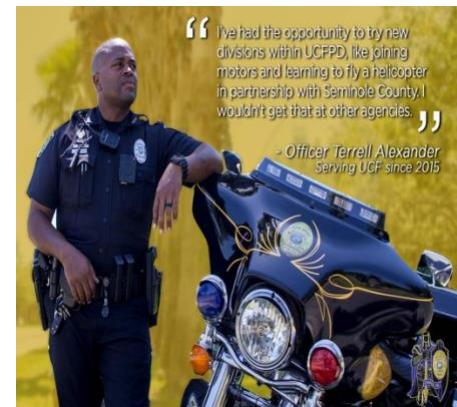
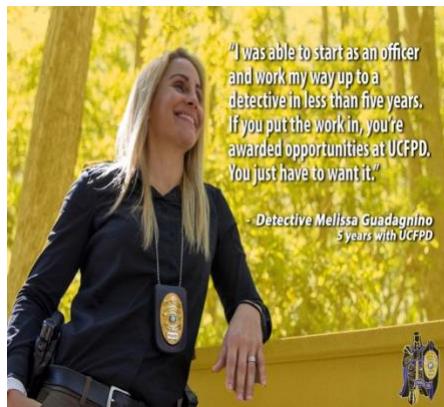


Figure 12. University of Central Florida Police Department Recruiting Materials. Provided to NPF, February 2019.

**Recommendation 8.5.2.3: The SFPD should consider utilizing additional forums to reach larger audiences.**

The SFPD should market to wider audiences outside of Santa Fe and even New Mexico by advertising through entities that reach audiences nationwide. Examples of these forums are the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (<https://www.theiacp.org/>), Discover Policing (<https://www.discoverpolicing.org/>), and PoliceOne (<https://www.policeone.com/>).

The city and region are beautiful and appealing to outdoor enthusiasts as well as those interested in the Arts. SFPD should capitalize on what the city has to offer in marketing materials such as posters and videos.

**8.5.3 Create an Effective Recruiting Unit**

**Recommendation 8.5.3.1: The SFPD should hand-pick at least one, preferably two officers to serve as the agency's recruiters.**

This is a critical position for the agency, and the recruiters should be the agency's best and most enthusiastic officers. These positions may even be funded at a detective or sergeant level with direct access to executive command. The responsibilities of the recruiter should include, but not limited to:

- Serving as the point of contact for potential and new recruits.
- Assisting candidates through the on-boarding process.
- Developing (with mentors) content or resources that could help candidates be successful through the hiring process.
- Maintaining a database of interested candidates.
- Providing consistent follow-up with applicants, coordination with agency mentors, and scheduling mentor attendance at events.
- Maintaining up-to-date and interesting social media pages dedicated to recruiting.
- Researching the best recruiting practices utilized by other agencies.
- Exploring innovative opportunities for community outreach.
- Discovering untapped candidate pools.

***Recommendation 8.5.3.2: The SFPD should assign background investigation duties to other personnel or add a civilian Background Investigator to this unit.***

SFPD's current recruiter is spending most of their time on background investigations and does not have time to execute recruitment duties and other essential functions of the job. To alleviate the burden of conducting background investigations on the recruiter, SFPD should create a civilian background investigator position or assign other personnel to complete this task as several officers within SFPD are certified Background Investigators.<sup>41</sup>

**8.5.4 Identify and Utilize Agency Mentors for Recruiting Efforts**

***Recommendation 8.5.4.1: The SFPD should create a department-wide approach to recruiting and utilize department personnel at all levels to serve as mentors to assist in recruiting efforts.***

Mentors are integral to recruitment and retention success. A recent study of criminal justice students showed that 54% of potential officer candidates view the job of a patrol officer as a stepping stone to a higher rank.<sup>42</sup> This supports that providing a well-documented and publicized career path for young officers is important for recruitment. In the same study, 71% of respondents said that having a mentor would help them to choose a police patrol career.<sup>42</sup> Several law enforcement agencies nationwide are realizing the benefits of a mentorship program. The San Jose Police Department in California utilizes off-duty officers to serve as "satellite recruiters" at community events to assist with mentoring and coaching applicants through the hiring process.<sup>43</sup>

Any SFPD employee can serve as a mentor and be involved in any aspect of recruiting and retention based on their skills and interests. Mentors can serve as the "face" of the department at community and recruitment events, assist with marketing material design, participate in videos, help with application screenings and the on-

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<sup>41</sup> National Police Foundation assessment team interviews with the Santa Fe Police Department Recruiting Officer. March 24, 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Scheer, C., Rosser, M., & Papania, L. (2018). Interest in police patrol careers: An assessment of potential candidates' impressions of the police recruitment, selection & training process." *The University of Southern Mississippi*.

<sup>43</sup> Maciag, M. (2018). With fewer police applicants, departments engage in bidding wars." *Governing*. Retrieved from <https://www.governing.com/topics/public-justice-safety/gov-hiring-police-officers.html>

boarding process, and take prospective recruits on ride-alongs. Mentorships should continue after recruits are hired to continue to build a network of support and camaraderie.

***Recommendation 8.5.4.2: The SFPD should consider providing specialty pay, bonuses, or other incentives for those who take on this extra assignment or those who successfully recruit a candidate (with the understanding this incentive would have to be negotiated with the union).***

Providing a monetary incentive for officers and staff to serve as a mentor to recruits and newly sworn officers is an option. Of course, those who volunteer should be capable of performing the duties needed to serve as a mentor and embody the characteristics that SFPD wants in their officers and staff.

#### **8.5.5 Review Selection and On-Boarding Process Considerations**

***Recommendation 8.5.5.1: The SFPD should constantly seek to understand the motivations of potential recruits to better focus recruitment efforts.***

A key piece of recruitment is understanding that motivations differ from person to person. Studies have found the highest motivators for those to become a police officer included helping others, job benefits, and job security.<sup>44</sup> The least important motivators were power and authority, influence from family and friends, and lack of other career alternatives.<sup>44</sup> This suggests that targeted recruitment can focus on intrinsic factors like job benefits and security, as well as altruistic motivators, such as helping others. Recognizing and balancing these different motivations will help SFPD develop specialized recruitment strategies to entice individuals with desired skill sets and backgrounds (i.e., military personnel, diversity/gender, and/or individuals with prior law enforcement experience).

***Recommendation 8.5.5.2: The SFPD should continuously research other police departments and agencies that have similar recruitment difficulties and mimic their model for improvement.***

The SFPD should look to the work of other public and private sector agencies, and police departments for ways to improve the recruitment process and address the concerns that recruits may have when contemplating whether to sign up for the SFPD. An example of the available resources on recruitment and retention best practices can be found in the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training's guidebook.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, SFPD should conduct research on existing programs and strategies from departments across the country that SFPD could connect with and potentially use as a model that may help with specific SFPD issues (i.e. housing programs that reduce living costs for officers; using community-based recruiters to help identify and cultivate relationships with potential/future recruits).

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<sup>44</sup> Waterman-Smith, E. J. (2017). Perceptions of justice and motivations for becoming a police officer: Differences across recruits and law enforcement officers. *Master of Science in Criminal Justice Theses & Policy Research Projects*. 1-111.

[http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mscj\\_etd/5](http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mscj_etd/5)

<sup>45</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2006). *Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Update, Peace Officer Standards and Training*. Sacramento, CA.

**Recommendation 8.5.5.3: The SFPD should create a more efficient and effective on-boarding process without compromising the quality and thoroughness of background investigations.**

In a report developed by Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to address the difficulties in hiring law enforcement officers, it suggested the following promising approaches that have been utilized by agencies that have made the hiring process more efficient and user-friendly, and in many cases, enhanced the overall quality of the investigative process: (1) more frequent and regular testing, (2) tighter, more flexible sequencing of hiring components, (3) more background investigators (4) continuous hiring, and (5) utilizing technology-based solutions.<sup>46</sup>

SFPD already conducts monthly physical agility and writing skills testing and should continue to do so since that schedule keeps a steady flow of applicants in the pipeline without overwhelming the process with a large number of applications coming in at once.

The SFPD should consider becoming more flexible and creative in scheduling new recruits for the different components of the hiring process. For example, the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington D.C. has streamlined its process, allowing applicants to complete several steps at once and in the same location.<sup>46</sup> This approach allows for applicants to know their testing schedule ahead of time, potentially reducing anxiety associated with wondering when they should receive a call back for the next phase and potentially attracting more applicants by having a transparent hiring process.

To increase flexibility and efficiency in the hiring process, the SFPD needs to have more background investigators as noted in a previous recommendation. The Los Angeles Police Department has taken 20 officers from field duty and assigned them to assist with background investigations. As a result, the background investigation process has been reduced from 12 months to 6-9 months.<sup>46</sup> Although the SFPD, may not be able to reassign 20 officers for background investigations, many officers are certified as background investigators and could be utilized on a rotating basis.

Many agencies have begun to hire on a continuous basis to reduce the number of vacancies in their departments. In New Orleans, applicants who pass the initial criminal background screening are offered a temporary civilian job within the department.<sup>46</sup> This approach not only gets highly qualified and desirable candidates into the department –reducing the chances the applicant will go to another agency– but also allows the department to observe and evaluate the candidate’s work habits and performance as the background investigation process is completed.<sup>46</sup> The SFPD should consider employing a similar approach to attract applicants that are eager to work and may be willing to accept lower pay if they can get into the department faster, even if as a civilian, instead of having to wait for the entire on-boarding process to be completed. This also allows for some vacancies to be filled, thus reducing the strain on current officers and staff.

The SFPD should also consider ways that it can automate the entire hiring process. The D.C. Metropolitan Police Department has completely automated their entire hiring process and has reduced the overall time-to-hire from 12-18 months to 3-4 months. This approach ensures that all staff involved in their hiring process has the most up to date information regarding an applicant and cuts down on the on-boarding process time for applicants.

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<sup>46</sup> Morison, K. P. (2017). Hiring for the 21st century law enforcement officer: Challenges, opportunities, and strategies for success. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Lastly, there should be a constant review of the points in the process where candidates are being disqualified. If there are specific areas where most recruits are lost, it may be possible to mitigate these issues by having preparatory classes for the written test, or more training sessions offered to those who have difficulty with the agility test. These consistent and thorough reviews are not just important for this area of selection but throughout the entire process. Demonstrating that SFPD is invested in a recruit's successful completion of the recruitment process may go a long way in whether a recruit opts to move forward with SFPD or another agency.

#### **8.5.6 Signing Bonus**

##### ***Recommendation 8.5.6.1: Consider providing a signing bonus comparable to competing agencies.***

In a survey that asked what has worked best to recruit and retain employees, signing bonuses were mentioned as an effective recruitment tool.<sup>47</sup> The SFPD currently advertises a signing bonus on its website. However, these promised bonuses were not delivered in a timely manner to some officers. This delay created a sense of distrust among officers and was perceived as the City of Santa Fe being unconcerned and uninterested in fulfilling its promise to new officers. Several officers interviewed noted that potential candidates for hire are aware of this delayed payment issue and is deterring some recruits. Although Santa Fe City Hall has now started to pay these bonuses in a timely manner, the resentment and distrust linger. A similar sentiment among officers and staff was noted with problems originating with City Hall regarding issuance of retention bonuses this year agreed to during the previous union contract. The SFPD and the City must continue to collaborate to ensure that new officers receive promised bonuses in a timely manner to mitigate recruitment issues.

## **8.6 NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPLIED RESEARCH AND DATA PLATFORM**

##### ***Recommendation 8.6.1: The SFPD should participate in the National Law Enforcement Applied Research and Data Platform.***

The NPF, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, manages the National Law Enforcement Applied Research and Data Platform. The Platform provides law enforcement executives with actionable survey data to inform policy, procedure, and strategy. The Platform creates a mechanism for law enforcement agencies to survey officers and staff regarding officer wellness and safety, perceptions of the department within the community, and the impact of technology. The Platform also offers external community surveys designed to measure the community's perceptions of the department and police-community interactions. Participating agencies can benchmark the results of the surveys (anonymously) with departments of similar size nationwide. The Platform is currently available at no cost to agencies.

The next year will be pivotal in determining if the collaborative efforts taken by the City of Santa Fe, the SFPD, and officers and staff will stem the flow of voluntary attrition. As strategies are implemented, participation in the Platform may offer the SFPD a means to gauge department perception and receptiveness.

The NPF team hopes that these recommendations will be beneficial in designing, implementing, and evaluating a viable recruiting and retention strategy that can serve as a model for law enforcement agencies in similar situations in the future.

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<sup>47</sup> California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2006). Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Update, Peace Officer Standards and Training. Sacramento, CA.

## **9 CONCLUSIONS AND MOVING FORWARD**

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When the National Police Foundation (NPF) team first engaged the Santa Fe Police Department (SFPD), we asked questions about why some officers stay with SFPD while others leave the department. We learned a great deal about the concerns of officers, and command staff. Knowing, acknowledging, and being transparent about the areas of greatest concern may go a long way in building trust between officers and command. An open line of communication between the agency and City Hall is also vital for the success of the agency. All groups work together to ensure the future success of the agency.

### **9.1 TRUST BUILDS RETENTION**

During interviews with the NPF Team, many officers and staff asked if they would have access to the final report. Our final recommendation is for the SFPD command to share the findings and recommendations of this project with the entire agency, as the officers and staff will have an integral role in developing, instituting, and evaluating long-term strategies recommended to improve the current situation. Additionally, information sharing will build credibility and trust within the entire department and the community.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Chief (ret.) Dean M. Esserman J.D.**, Senior Counselor with the National Police Foundation (NPF), previously served as Chief of Police in New Haven, Connecticut; Providence, Rhode Island; Stamford, Connecticut; and the New York MTA-Metro North Police Department. From 1987 to 1991, he served as the general counsel to Chief William Bratton of the New York City Transit Police. He started his career as an Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, New York, and as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College (B.A.) and the New York University of Law (J.D.). He has held university appointments with the Yale Law School, Yale University, Yale Child Study Center, University of New Haven, and Roger Williams University. He is the past Chair of the IACP's Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Committee.

**Chief (ret.) Brett Meade Ed.D.**, Senior Program Manager with the NPF, served 36 years as a law enforcement officer with executive and command experience with the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the University of Central Florida Police Department in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Meade has an extensive understanding of all phases of recruiting, selection, and retention of law enforcement officers, having led successful recruiting initiatives for police agencies. His doctoral dissertation studied police executive perception of voluntary turnover of law enforcement officers within a tourist reliant region. Chief Meade is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute Command Officer's Development Course, the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Executive Future Studies Program, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Executive Development Seminar, and the Florida Police Chief's Association Future Law Enforcement Executive course. He earned an Associate's degree in Criminology from Daytona State College, a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Columbia College, a Master's degree in Public Administration from Webster University, and a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Northcentral University.

**Terri Robbins (M.S.)**, Project Coordinator with the NPF. Her primary project is the National Law Enforcement Applied Research and Data Platform. She received her Master's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of New Haven and a Bachelor of Science degree from Penn State University. Prior to joining the National Police Foundation, she completed a Crime Analysis internship with the Alexandria Police Department where she earned a Silver President's Volunteer Service Award. She also acted as a Research Assistant for a project that evaluated several department adjustments to a community problem-solving approach.

**Danielle Parsons (M.S.)**, Project Associate with the NPF, primarily supports the BJA VALOR Officer Safety Project. Danielle has interned with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Parole Commission, which spurred her interest and pursuit of identifying problems in the criminal justice system and crafting solutions using evidence-based practices and policies. Her areas of interest include reducing barriers for ex-offenders, community-oriented policing, and using empirically-based research to inform criminal justice reform. Danielle received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and Crime and Justice from the University of Michigan and a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University.

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL POLICE FOUNDATION

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The National Police Foundation (NPF) is the oldest nationally-known, non-profit, non-partisan, and non-membership driven police research organization. Founded in 1970 by the Ford Foundation, the NPF (then the “Police Foundation”) seeks to help the police be more effective in doing their job. Over the last 45 years, the NPF has supported or conducted numerous scientific studies in policing that has helped shape policing today. The NPF works with federal funding partners, state governments, cities, counties, and private sector organizations to conduct studies, assessments, training and technical assistance related to crime and policing.

The NPF is constantly engaged in a variety of research and training & technical assistance (TTA) projects to continue its dedication to improving policing through innovation and science.